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LABOR SHORTAGES IN THE GDRDie Wirtschaft
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A. Arndt

Changes in the 1953 Economic Plan and the planned increase in production for 1954, particularly in the foodstuffs and consumer goods industry, require the entrance of hundreds of thousands of new workers into the labor market. The plan changes during the second half of 1953 alone required 250,000 additional workers for the production process.

It is no secret that important branches of the economy were not sufficiently supplied with workers, there having been a particular shortage of technicians. The shortage of construction experts and workers which has existed for years is becoming more and more evident since the beginning of the large-scale housing-construction program. In the first few years after 1945, many construction workers took jobs in industrial plants and remained there. Even if these workers could be brought back into the construction field, they would not be sufficient to cover the need.

The situation is similar in the construction-material extracting or producing industry and in agriculture. Without the help of workers from factories and offices, the 1953 harvest could not have been completed.

In the sugar industry there is a shortage of thousands of workers needed for the processing of sugar beets. Despite intensive recruiting, the shortage of workers in the sugar factories has not yet been adequately covered.

For some time now, several of the more important industrial branches have had only 95 to 97 percent of their required labor-force complement. The number of job seekers registered with labor offices and vocational training schools is only a fraction of the number required to fill the needs of all branches of the economy. In addition, it must be taken into consideration that most of these job seekers are registered only temporarily while changing positions.

Real labor reserves can only be found among housewives, physically handicapped people who are able to work, and young people who could not be induced to enter the labor market directly upon leaving school.

In the past, mobilization of unused labor reserves brought good results. About 97 percent of the physically handicapped who are able to work have been employed in production. The government has passed laws which state that 10 percent of the labor force of every enterprise must consist of physically handicapped personnel.

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The participation of women in production work has increased from 36 percent in June 1950 to 38 percent in December 1952. The percentage of young workers also increased, from 8.8 percent [in 1950?] to 11.3 percent in December 1952.

To further alleviate the labor shortage, it will be necessary to train the workers already employed in factories to fill jobs requiring more skill. Untrained women, youths, and the physically handicapped can then be placed in the unskilled jobs thus vacated. The government labor administration and the mass organizations must support the plants in recruiting the above-mentioned groups for the labor market.

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